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Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Letter dated 7 August 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

With the agreement of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I have the honour to transmit the text of the resolutions adopted at the 103rd Inter-Parliamentary Conference, which was held in Amman from 27 April to 6 May 2000 (see annex).*

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 27.

(*Signed*) Zeid Ra'ad **Al-Hussein**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* The annex is being issued as received in the languages of submission only.

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Annex to the letter dated 7 August 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

ACHIEVING PEACE, STABILITY AND COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORLD AND FORGING CLOSER POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL TIES AMONG PEOPLES

Resolution adopted without a vote* by the 103rd Conference (Amman, 5 May 2000)

The 103rd Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Considering that parliaments, as representatives of the people, play an important role in promoting dialogue and strengthening cordial ties between nations and peoples in the political, economic and cultural fields with a view to attaining global stability and peace,

Convinced that the United Nations and regional organisations under the UN Charter are more necessary than ever in order to contain and resolve conflicts between nations and that the United Nations must remain the cornerstone of strong global cooperation and *welcoming* in this connection the ongoing reforms within the UN,

Concerned by the actions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that have not succeeded in reducing the gap between rich and poor countries,

Considering that although the globalisation of economies, the increase in trade and the acceleration of technical progress undoubtedly fuel growth, they also worsen the imbalances between the wealthiest and poorest countries insofar as they give priority above all else to market forces,

Convinced that the inequitable distribution of wealth between countries and the considerable discrepancy in people's living standards are major factors of imbalance and a source of conflict among nations,

Convinced also that inequalities within a country prevent sustainable development,

Aware that genuine and lasting peace is essential to sustainable economic, social and cultural development focused on the human being and shared by all,

Recalling that the participation of people in choices concerning them is necessary for any project to succeed,

Stressing that women do not participate equally with men in political, economic and social decision-making and that often discrimination against women, including poverty, denial of access to education, violence and sexual exploitation, limits their ability to contribute to the prevention and resolution of conflict within and between States,

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* The Indian delegation expressed its reservations regarding operative paragraph 16.

Affirming that parliamentary democracy based on respect for human rights is the best means of ensuring transparency, justice, the freedom of peoples and concord among nations,

Stressing that transparency in decision-making and full access to information attract greater commitment by those involved,

Concerned at overarmament, which generates mistrust between countries and financial waste,

Greatly concerned that poverty and its consequences, including hunger, malnutrition and illiteracy, engender helplessness and marginalisation, which are an obstacle to participation in society and in decision-making processes,

Reaffirming the importance of the IPU resolution on "Parliamentary action to encourage all countries to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty prohibiting all nuclear testing, to encourage universal and non-discriminatory nuclear non-proliferation measures and to work towards the eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons" adopted by the 101st IPU Conference (April 1999, Brussels), the ultimate aim of which is the abolition of all forms of nuclear weapons,

1. *Welcomes* the United Nations' proclamation of the year 2000 as the International Year for the Culture of Peace;

2. *Recommends* that all governments pursue policies and adopt mechanisms to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities, and in this regard *reiterates* its commitment to the implementation of the final Declaration adopted by the specialised Inter-Parliamentary Conference on Attaining the World Food Summit's Objectives Through a Sustainable Development Strategy, held in Rome in 1998;

3. *Urges* nations and international organisations to give priority to developing programmes concerning women and children;

4. *Recalls* that the United Nations General Assembly recommended that developed countries raise the amount of their official development assistance to 0.7 per cent of GNP;

5. *Urges* international financial organisations to support programmes for combating poverty and marginalisation, to limit the adverse effects of adjustment programmes on the most vulnerable sectors of the population and to give priority to social objectives;

6. *Further urges* the international community to pursue its endeavours to restructure the trade system in keeping with the principles of non-discrimination and mutual benefit;

7. *Supports* decisions to cancel the external debt of heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs) and *calls for* broader criteria of eligibility for such measures, in conformity with the IPU resolution on this subject adopted at its 101st Conference in Brussels;

8. *Advocates* the conversion of the external debt of emerging countries into social development projects;

9. *Recalls* that environmental conservation and development are essential to sustainable development, peace between peoples and the survival of future generations;

10. *Calls on* all States to implement Agenda 21 adopted by the Earth Summit in 1992 and updated in 1997;

11. *Reaffirms* the importance of the IPU resolution on "Cooperation for world and regional security and stability, as well as for respect of all forms of the sovereignty and independence of States", adopted by the 97th IPU Conference (April 1997, Seoul);

12. *Considers* that confidence-building measures are a good means of strengthening security and stability in international relations, in particular through an ongoing dialogue on defence and security concepts and doctrines;

13. *Requests* the abolition of those types of sanctions that hit civilians, and especially children, the hardest;

14. *Deplores* the stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons, and the rapid increase in the illicit trafficking of small arms which are becoming more and more threatening;

15. *Urges* all States to limit their armed forces strictly to their security needs and to use the resources thus released to pursue peace and cooperation;

16. *Recommends* the signing and ratification by all States of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

17. *Hopes* for the earliest possible disappearance of all weapons of mass destruction, be they conventional, biological, chemical or nuclear.

DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILISATIONS AND CULTURES

Resolution adopted without a vote by the 103rd Conference
(Amman, 5 May 2000)

The 103rd Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

Reaffirming the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Welcoming the fact that the United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed the year 2001 "United Nations Year for Dialogue among Civilizations",

Welcoming also the decision of the UN Secretary-General to appoint a personal representative for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations,

Recalling UNESCO's essential role in international cooperation in the cultural field, and *noting with satisfaction* its important contribution to the implementation of the objectives of the United Nations Year for Dialogue among Civilizations, notably through its intercultural projects,

Recalling that, according to its Statutes, one of the purposes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is to work for peace and cooperation among peoples,

Recalling further that the Inter-Parliamentary Union is the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue,

Recognising the significant role that the Inter-Parliamentary Union can play in enhancing interaction between societies and peoples and promoting dialogue among different civilisations,

Reaffirming that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent,

Conscious that every civilisation and culture is unique and irreplaceable,

Aware that all cultures and civilisations are part of the common legacy of humankind,

Noting that recurring problems generated by conflict, such as humanitarian crises, violations of human rights and refugee outflows; and global issues, including poverty, international organised crime, terrorism and worldwide environmental problems, pose real threats to every human being and *believing* that tolerance and respect of other cultures are prerequisites for lasting peace,

Stressing that a focus on dialogue between civilisations and cultures must not be invoked to justify discriminatory laws and practices within cultures and civilisations, especially regarding women, and must not be used to pursue human rights less diligently,

Further stressing that respect for differences and tolerance of others in society, regardless of their sex, race, religion or political affiliation, are as important as respect and tolerance for other cultures and civilisations,

Convinced that dialogue among different cultures and civilisations – within States as well as between States - can contribute to making their common values, including universal human rights, more easily discernible,

Recognising that positive and mutually beneficial interaction among civilisations has contributed throughout human history to the peaceful coexistence of nations and to the cultural enrichment of people,

Asserting that, just as biodiversity enriches our natural environment and is essential for its protection, cultural diversity is a treasure of humanity and a prerequisite for human development,

Emphasising the important role of dialogue throughout society: individuals, governments, non-governmental organisations, and national and international organisations,

Convinced that education can contribute to a better understanding of other cultures and civilisations,

Noting that tolerance and respect for diversity facilitate the full enjoyment of all universal rights by all individuals,

Recalling Article 27 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which establishes that "everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits",

Recognising that international cultural and scientific exchange is conducive to instilling in different cultures and civilisations mutual respect and trust, and a willingness to engage in dialogue with each other,

Conscious that the technological expansion of the media, in particular the Internet, is bringing different cultures and civilisations ever closer, and that while this increases the possibility of dialogue, it can also be perceived as a threat to cultural diversity,

Recalling that the Stockholm Conference on Cultural Policies for Development stated that "cultural goods and services should be fully recognised and treated as not being like other forms of merchandise",

Acknowledging that the opportunities offered by globalisation might be enhanced by taking appropriate account of the diversity of cultures and civilisations,

Conscious that the social changes accompanying globalisation entail risks as well as opportunities, and are therefore a source of concern or fear for some,

Noting that in a globalised society joint action by the world community depends on understanding which transcends differences rooted in civilisations and cultures,

Emphasising that dialogue among cultures and civilisations should foster understanding of shared values and observance of universal human rights,

1. *Resolves* to promote dialogue among civilisations and cultures;

2. *Invites* parliaments to take effective measures to maintain and promote cultural diversity at the national and international level and, more particularly, to encourage the fulfilment of all cultures present on their territory, *inter alia* by enacting laws providing for freedom of expression and creation, pluralism of the media, the participation of all women and men in cultural and political life and the protection of minority cultures;

3. *Calls on* parliaments to strive for open and broad-based intercultural dialogue which recognises the importance of intellectual, artistic and creative contributions;

4. *Calls on* parliaments to ensure freedom for all to participate in the cultural and political life of the community;

5. *Calls on* parliaments to urge their governments to work for free access to education for all, as well as equal access for girls and boys, especially in technology and communication media;

6. *Calls on* States to ensure that training and education help promote mutual respect and trust between cultures and civilisations, to include courses on intercultural dialogue in training and education programmes and to encourage citizens to learn several languages;

7. *Invites* national parliaments and parliamentarians to take an active part in the programmes of the United Nations and UNESCO for the dialogue among civilisations and cultures and to encourage their governments to contribute to such programmes;

8. *Invites* States to take action to promote diversity while ensuring commonality of values and respect for fundamental human rights, and to devise policies that protect minority groups and laws that guarantee the full exercise of their fundamental rights;

9. *Urges* all States that have not yet done so urgently to ratify or accede to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and comply unreservedly with the consequent obligations, and to ratify the CEDAW Optional Protocol, and *calls on* all States to eliminate traditional practices that are harmful to women and children, violence, sexual abuse and exploitation;

10. *Calls on* governments to acknowledge that the human rights of children are frequently breached, resulting in their physical and sexual abuse, and to take practical measures to combat such abuse, and *proposes* the establishment of an inter-parliamentary network under the auspices of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to combat child abuse;

11. *Calls* on governments to seek assistance from the UN and other relevant international bodies in promoting and protecting all human rights for everyone;

12. *Calls on* States to remove obstacles to direct access to the new media with a view to guaranteeing equal information opportunities for all while striving to introduce mechanisms which will protect children;

13. *Proposes* that development cooperation programmes include more cultural projects, such as initiatives to stimulate burgeoning cultural industries in developing countries, and *underscores* the need to take fuller account of the cultural identity of the beneficiaries when preparing and implementing these programmes;

14. *Invites* States to facilitate the negotiation of new international trade agreements and instruments which promote, protect and preserve cultural and linguistic diversity by allowing countries to support their cultural industries and products, and *emphasises* that cultural goods and services should be recognised as being unlike other forms of merchandise and treated as such;

15. *Calls on* States to exploit the technological potential of the new media to promote understanding between cultures and civilisations;

16. *Calls on* national parliaments, governments, all members of civil society, national and international institutions to participate actively in dialogue between cultures and civilisations;

17. *Fully supports* the appeal of the United Nations General Assembly for the organisation of appropriate cultural, education and social programmes during the Year for Dialogue among Civilizations, and *recommends* that the bodies concerned do not confine themselves to awareness-building activities aimed at promoting the idea of dialogue among civilisations but rather take the opportunity of the United Nations Year to launch or encourage practical dialogues between cultures or civilisations at the local, national, regional or world level which can continue beyond the year 2001;

18. *Calls on* governments to respond positively to offers of assistance, in particular when UN Special Rapporteurs and working groups and other organisations or individuals request visits to their countries, with a view to engaging in further meaningful dialogue;

19. *Urges* parliaments and parliamentarians:

    (a) To assume their responsibility for achieving the goals of a policy of dialogue among civilisations and cultures, in particular through the adoption of legislative measures and the allocation of the required budgetary resources;

    (b) To establish a parliamentary dialogue among civilisations and cultures, within the framework of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and through such initiatives as the founding of inter-parliamentary friendship groups;

20. *Stresses* the need for States to ensure that their national curricula at all levels of education, and more particularly at the early stages, provide students and pupils with opportunities to acquire knowledge of and respect for all cultures, religions and civilisations and promote a general culture of peace and tolerance, and *stresses* the need to give particular attention to the elimination of sexist stereotyping and sexist language, especially from school textbooks;

21. *Recommends* that the Secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and national parliaments, in coordination with the United Nations Secretariat, UNESCO and other relevant organisations, prepare the contribution of IPU to the programmes of the year 2001, the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

SUPPORT OF PARLIAMENTS FOR THE RIGHTS OF REFUGEES AND PERSONS DISPLACED BY WAR AND OCCUPATION, AND ASSISTANCE WITH A VIEW TO THEIR REPATRIATION, AND FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO COMBAT THE CRIMINAL ACTIVITY OF PEOPLE-SMUGGLING

Resolution adopted without a vote* by the 103rd Conference
(Amman, 5 May 2000)

The 103rd Inter-Parliamentary Conference,

A. Refugees

Deeply concerned at the increasing numbers of refugees and persons displaced by occupation, wars and disputes in different parts of the world,

Reaffirming the fundamental importance of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol of 1967,

Recalling the principle of non-refoulement, enshrined in international law, which requires that no State shall return a refugee in any manner to a country where his or her life or freedom may be endangered and includes non-rejection at the frontier,

Expressing grave concern at the poor conditions afflicting refugees and displaced persons, and at their severe suffering,

Aware that the majority of refugees are women, children and elderly people who need special care and assistance,

Recalling that the problem of refugees and displaced persons is not only a human problem but is closely linked to regional stability and international security,

Noting that large refugee populations can adversely affect the countries and communities where they are granted refuge by placing a strain on resources, the socio-economic and natural environment, and on social and political stability,

Recognising the need to take all necessary measures to guarantee protection for all refugees and displaced persons who are in urgent need of it,

Confirming the need for coordination of national, regional and international efforts to devise policies and laws which guarantee the provision of international aid to any person or group of persons urgently in need of it,

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* The delegation of Israel expressed its rejection of the operative paragraph 7 of Section A of the resolution as amended by a vote. After the adoption of the text of the resolution as a whole, the delegations of Australia, Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq stated their reservations on certain parts of the resolution.

Affirming that the primary obligation of governments is to prevent the creation of refugee flows by addressing their root causes, in particular endemic poverty, conflict, political persecution and repression, and ethnic and racial discrimination,

Recalling that the right of all persons, including refugees and persons displaced by war and occupation, to return to their country is a fundamental right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Noting that the displacement of civilian populations in time of war, occupation or conflict is immoral and unlawful and constitutes a serious violation of international law and human rights,

Considering that acknowledgement of moral and legal responsibility for the displacement of refugees is an important step towards remedial action and reconciliation,

Recognising that repatriation does not impair the right of refugees to claim compensation for physical, material and psychological injury,

Concerned at the growing dangers and physical risks to the staff of UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies carrying out protection work in the field,

1. *Urges* those countries which have not already done so to accede to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol of 1967, and to other universal instruments of international humanitarian and human rights law and *calls on* all States to fulfil their consequent obligations;

2. *Calls on* all countries to uphold the right of asylum of all those in need of it and to respect fully the principle of non-refoulement;

3. *Urges* States to address all the root causes of armed conflict in order to ensure the long-term protection of civilians *inter alia* through the promotion of economic growth, poverty eradication, sustainable development, national reconciliation, good governance, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for and protection of human rights;

4. *Calls on* States, on all parties to armed conflicts and on UN bodies and other organisations to give urgent attention to protection and assistance for the most vulnerable among refugee and internally displaced populations, particularly women and children who may be subjected to sexual violence, abuse or exploitation and exposed to risks arising from armed conflict, including the forcible recruitment of children;

5. *Underlines* the importance of the safe and unrestricted access of humanitarian personnel to civilians affected by armed conflict, including refugees and internally displaced persons, and the protection of humanitarian assistance to them, and *calls on* all States and concerned parties to take all possible measures to guarantee the safety, security and freedom of movement of UN and associated humanitarian personnel;

6. *Stresses* the importance of international solidarity and burden-sharing in reinforcing international protection for refugees; *urges* States and relevant non-governmental and other organisations, in conjunction with the UNHCR, to cooperate in mobilising resources with a view to reducing the burden borne by States, in particular developing countries, that have received large numbers of asylum-seekers and refugees, and *calls on* the UNHCR to continue to play a catalytic role in mobilising assistance to address the economic, environmental and social impact of large refugee populations;

7. Without losing sight of refugee problems in other parts of the world - *expresses* its strong support for all efforts to achieve a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, including the Palestinian refugees' right of return, in accordance with UN resolution 194, the Madrid Conference principle of Land for Peace, and the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 242, 338, 425 and the Oslo Accords;

8. *Calls on* the UN and its specialised agencies and on all governments to give priority to the issue of refugees and displaced persons, speed up the search for solutions to the disputes which led to their expulsion and migration, and provide the necessary aid to meet their essential needs.

B. People-smuggling

Recognising the challenge that has emerged worldwide through the rapid growth of organised people-smuggling and its links with organised crime,

Recalling that people-smuggling can lead, in the country of asylum, to sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced marriage, forced adoption, begging or criminal activities being imposed by the traffickers on vulnerable illegal migrants, especially women and children,

Acknowledging that the root causes of irregular migration and people-smuggling are discrepancies in living standards and opportunities, and the frequent failure of the international community and of States to prevent conflict, political persecution and communal strife,

Further acknowledging the refugee and irregular migrant burden carried by countries of first asylum as well as other countries which are used as transit, the need for greater international burden sharing, and the link between the inadequacy of international efforts to find lasting refugee solutions and the misuse of domestic asylum systems through people-smuggling,

Concerned that the illegal smuggling of people is undermining the proper exercise of national sovereignty, leading to the misuse of migration and asylum procedures and imposing huge costs on all countries concerned,

Further concerned that the community consensus on the compassionate treatment of refugees and the belief in the benefits of legal and orderly movements of people are being harmed by irregular movements and people-smuggling,

Deeming it morally abhorrent that people smugglers are making large amounts of money by exploiting vulnerable groups of people, and *underscoring* the concern of the world's nations to stamp out trafficking in human beings,

Realising that no country can solve the problem on its own, and that international partnerships and cooperation are the only means of countering the global networks of organised criminal groups involved in people-smuggling activities,

1. *Calls on* parliaments to urge their respective governments to enact and strictly enforce sanctions against people smugglers, and to join forces with other countries and international agencies to suppress and prevent people-smuggling;

2. *Invites* parliaments and governments to ensure the social reintegration of their returnees;

3. *Appeals* to parliaments to pursue cooperative and innovative action with the UNHCR to find expeditious and durable solutions for refugees and to strengthen the framework for international protection, thus reducing and, hopefully, stopping the flow of persons who may be exploited by people smugglers;

4. *Calls on* parliaments to urge their governments to cooperate in addressing the root causes of forced movements of people, by preventing conflict, reducing poverty and complying with international human rights agreements and international humanitarian law;

5. *Calls on* States to take an active part in the completion of the draft UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols concerning trafficking in persons, including immigrants and particularly women and children, and to ensure that they quickly come into force.